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## PETER JACOB COSIJN.

**In Memoriam.**

The recent death of Professor Cosijn, the distinguished English philologist of the University of Leiden, while he was in the midst of his year of office as rector of that venerable institution, demands some notice from a periodical representing the science to which the best efforts of his life were devoted. If in these pages I undertake to give a brief account of his life, it is because I have been able to draw freely upon an excellent article by Professor Gallée, in *De Amsterdammer Weekblad voor Nederland* of September 10, 1899.

Cosijn was born at the historic village of Ryswick, two miles south-east of the Hague, November 29, 1840. His father was a major in the Dutch army, and lived for a time in the West Indies. Cosijn was the only son, but had two sisters. His earlier education was acquired partly at the Hague, and partly at the gymnasia of Gouda and of Utrecht. He entered the University of Utrecht in 1857 as a student of law, but soon changed to the Faculty of Letters, the teaching in which was practically restricted to Greek, Latin, and history. Cosijn attended the lectures of Rovers on history, Brill on Dutch history and language, and Van Herwerden on Greek. But perhaps the strongest scholarly influence which he experienced at this time was that of Opzoomer, the professor of philosophy, for which subject Cosijn conceived a decided taste. Besides philosophy and the classics, he occupied himself with art, mediæval and modern literature, and the authors of the seventeenth century, thus laying a broad basis for his future special studies. He became candidate in March, 1860, and passed his examination for the doctorate two years later, but left the University in 1863, and did not return till 1865, when, on June 26, he presented a thesis entitled, *Annotatiuncula ad Aristophanis Ranas*.

During his years at the University he had received no systematic instruction in Germanics, not even in Old and Middle Dutch; but being installed as a teacher of his native language at Haarlem soon after his graduation, he began to turn his attention to the provision of better text-books for the study of the modern tongue. His first books were purely practical in their nature, a smaller and a larger Dutch grammar for use in primary and intermediate schools, and other similar works, which for a long time maintained their place as the best of their kind. By 1870 he had formed the acquaintance of De Vries,

Kern, and Gallée. In that year he became a contributor to the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* of De Vries, Te Winkel, and others, a work after the model of Grimm's *Wörterbuch*, which even yet is not completed, and, together with Verwijs, founded the *Taal- en Letterbode*, to which he contributed various scholarly articles. More and more he turned from the study of literature to that of language, no doubt impelled by the need for better text-books. Though Cosijn's salary was small, and facilities for acquainting himself with the progress of German scholarship were imperfect, he obtained a familiarity with the work of the neogrammatical school of Germanists—Paul, Braune, Sievers, and their associates—and turned it to account in his own special investigations. After acquiring a knowledge of Middle and Old Dutch, he became interested in the Old Dutch or Old Low Frankish interlinear version of the Psalms, and in 1873 published an extremely accurate account of its language under the title, *De Oudnederlandsche Psalmen* (also in *Taal- en Letterbode*, vols. 3 and 4). In conjunction with Kern he collated the so-called Lipsian Glosses, or notes made by the celebrated Lipsius on the language of the Psalter, as contained in the unique manuscript, which has since been lost; these were published in *Taal- en Letterbode*, vols. 5 and 6.

He next turned his attention to Old English, and to Old Norse as a means to the fuller understanding of Old English. In 1877 he was made Professor of Gothic, Old English, and Old Saxon at the University of Leiden, but in general was expected to give all the necessary instruction in the subject of Germanics. His chief interest from this time forth was in Old English, largely because it offered so great a variety of difficult problems, requiring acumen and sound judgment for their solution. Some of his more important publications in this field are studies of the *Cura Pastoralis* and *Chronicle* (in *Taalkundige Bijdragen*, No. 2, Haarlem, 1877); *Kurzgefasste Altwestsächsische Grammatik*, Leiden, 1881 (2d edition, Leiden, 1893); *Altwestsächsische Grammatik*, The Hague, 1883, 1886; *Cynewulf's Runenverzen*, Amsterdam, 1890; *Aanteekeningen op den Beowulf*, Leiden, 1892; a series of emendations and exegetical notes on the poetry, under the title *Anglosaxonica*, published in *Paul und Braune's Beiträge*, vols. 19 and 20; and *De Waldere-Fragmenten*, 1895.

Of these I can speak most confidently concerning the *Altwestsächsische Grammatik* and the *Anglosaxonica*. The former is a repertory of all the information that one can ask regarding the phonological and inflectional peculiarities of the language of Alfred. The work is dedicated to Sweet, and the author acknowledges obligation to Sievers, Paul, Zupitza, Ten Brink, Kluge, and Symons, though, as he explains, his plan forbids reference under individual points. In the phonology, it is necessary to be pretty well acquainted with Germanics in order to find what one is in search of, since the vowels are classified on the

basis of their Germanic originals. The extensive word-lists, with comment reduced to a minimum, tend at first to repel rather than attract; but the student soon learns that the classification can be depended upon, and that the references are singularly accurate. So full are the citations that the grammar serves at need as an index to Alfred's works. In fact the book is, and is likely always to remain, an indispensable one to the Old English scholar. As for the *Anglo-saxonica*, Cosijn's suggestions and emendations deserve to be carefully weighed in the constitution and interpretation of a poetical text, as I have had occasion to convince myself in editing the *Christ*. His remarks are acute, learned, and quite as judicious as those of the average emendator. It would be too much to expect that they should always commend themselves to another student; but I gladly acknowledge my own indebtedness to them, so far as the *Christ* is concerned.

Besides his joint editorship of the *Taal- en Letterbode*, he also shared in the conduct of *Taalkundige Bijdragen*, to which, as well as to the *Tijdschrift van de Maatschappij van Nederlandsche Letterkunde* (Leiden), and the *Verslagen en Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen*, he was a valued contributor.

In 1898 he was honored by an election to the rectorate, and on February 2, 1899 he delivered his official address, *Over Angelsaksische Poesie*, on the 424th anniversary of the opening of the University.

Cosijn was something of a humorist, as his solidest book bears witness. The last words of his *Altwestsächsische Grammatik* are a quotation from Alfred's Orosius: 'Gif his hwā sie lustfull märe tō witanne, sēce him þonne self þæt!' He could be sharp of tongue, too. He abhorred dulness and vanity, and was inclined to prick the bubble of pretension whenever opportunity offered. But he seems never to have been actuated by malice, and his friends enjoyed rather than feared his wit. Whether in public or private, he was outspoken and fearless, and there never could be any doubt as to where he stood. With all this he had a capacity for reverence, and was an attached and loyal friend.

To earnest and industrious students he was invaluable as a teacher. His love for his subject, wide and exact knowledge, and stimulating criticism, were in a high degree calculated to arouse the interest and train the powers of those who were privileged to enjoy his more intimate instruction.

My last letter from him was after I had missed seeing him on the occasion of a call at his house in the summer of 1898. We had corresponded occasionally, but had never met, I had asked him to contribute to the JOURNAL OF GERMANIC PHILOLOGY, and he now replied, alleging the duties of the rectorate as a reason why he could undertake nothing at the moment: 'Die nöthige Musse um etwas Neues in die Welt zu schicken wird mir wohl nicht gegeben sein.'

Aber "Aufgeschoben ist nicht aufgehoben," und wir werden später sehen ob ich etwas machen kann das Ihrer Zeitschrift würdig sein wird. Jedenfalls ist es mir eine grosse Ehre dazu angesucht zu sein. Empfangen Sie dafür meinen aufrichtigen Dank.'

When he wrote this letter he had already returned from Switzerland, where the first symptoms of the disease that was to prove fatal had been noted by a physician. He grew gradually worse, and toward the end of August the pain became so intolerable that he requested an operation which he knew to be extremely dangerous. Two days after he died, August 26, 1899. His widow survives him; he never had a child.

Holland has produced two notable English philologists in the present century, Ten Brink and Cosijn. Born within two months of each other, they were past their first youth before they arrived at the subjects in which they were to win fame. Ten Brink was 32 when he was called as Professor of English Philology to Strassburg, and Cosijn was 37 when he gained his professorship at Leiden. Both were men of literary tastes who gained distinction in linguistic work; but the reputation of Ten Brink is that of the literary historian and stylist, while Cosijn is known chiefly through his investigations into language. Between them, however, there is one important difference: Ten Brink was educated in Germany, gained much of his training in Romance philology, and labored till his death on foreign soil; Cosijn, on the other hand, acquired most of his knowledge of modern philology by himself, came close to his own people in the lower schools, never lived abroad, and died in the highest scholastic office in his country's gift. Holland may well be proud of the abilities and performance of both; but she can hardly help looking with a peculiar affection on him whose whole life was spent in her own service, while yet his fame keeps pace with the diffusion of English scholarship throughout the globe.

ALBERT S. COOK.

YALE UNIVERSITY.  
Nov. 26, 1899.